General Nivelle considered it possible to break through. M. Briand therefore urged that in the examination of this question its repercussion on the offensive, which had been so long prepared^ should be carefully considered. He therefore expressed sympathy with the proposal, but reserved it for technical examination, and at present he would not attempt to anticipate the opinion of the military experts. He urged, however, the importance of the spring offensive being decisive/[5]

Continuing, M. Briand said that,

" if we could really break through to Trieste, he would be quite in accord, and thought that we ought to undertake the operation. *In view, however, of the importance of not unsettling the military plans which were now far advanced, he felt bound to make a reserve in welcoming the proposal*"

I replied that

" I did not propose for one moment that my plan should be decided on without the fullest 7 *refuse to* examination. I urged, however, that *treat military* the Government should not take as *opinion as* final a declaration by General Nivelle, *infallible* Qr General Douglas Haig, that they could not spare the guns. Of course, the Generals would not allow the guns to go. / *did not deny that the Generals were just as confident now as they had ever been, but I pointed out that they had*

always been just as confident before previous offensives. The Central Powers, however, did not confine their efforts to one front as each of the Allied Generals did.